

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 20

RIN 1018-AC79

Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; Supplemental.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (hereinafter the Service) is proposing to establish the 1995-96 early-season hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds. The Service annually prescribes frameworks, or outer limits, for dates and times when hunting may occur and the maximum number of birds that may be taken and possessed in early seasons. These frameworks are necessary to allow State selections of final seasons and limits and to allow recreational harvest at levels compatible with population status and habitat conditions.

DATES: The comment period for proposed early-season frameworks will end on July 31, 1995; and for late-season proposals on September 4, 1995. A public hearing on late-season regulations will be held on August 3, 1995, starting at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The August 3 public hearing will be held in the Auditorium of the Department of the Interior Building, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC. Written comments on these proposals and notice of intention to participate in the late-season hearing should be sent in writing to the Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, room 634—Arlington Square, Washington, DC 20240. Comments received will be available for public inspection during normal business hours in room 634, Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul R. Schmidt, Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Regulations Schedule for 1995**

On March 24, 1995, the Service published for public comment in the **Federal Register** (60 FR 15642) a proposal to amend 50 CFR part 20. Comment periods were specified to end June 21 and September 4, 1995, respectively. Due to some unforeseen and uncontrollable publishing delays in the proposed early-season regulations

frameworks, the Service has extended the public comment period to July 31, 1995. On June 16, 1995, the Service published for public comment a second document (60 FR 31890) which provided supplemental proposals for early- and late-season migratory bird hunting regulations frameworks.

On June 22, 1995, a public hearing was held in Washington, DC, as announced in the March 24 and June 16 **Federal Registers** to review the status of migratory shore and upland game birds. Proposed hunting regulations were discussed for these species and for other early seasons.

This document is the third in a series of proposed, supplemental, and final rulemaking documents for migratory bird hunting regulations and deals specifically with proposed frameworks for early-season regulations. It will lead to final frameworks from which States may select season dates, shooting hours, and daily bag and possession limits for the 1995-96 season. All pertinent comments received through June 22, 1995, have been considered in developing this document. In addition, new proposals for certain early-season regulations are provided for public comment. Comment periods are specified above under **DATES**. Final regulatory frameworks for early seasons are scheduled for publication in the **Federal Register** on or about August 16, 1995.

This supplemental proposed rulemaking consolidates further changes in the original framework proposals published in the March 24 **Federal Register**. The regulations for early waterfowl hunting seasons proposed in this document are based on the most current information available about the status of waterfowl populations and habitat conditions on the breeding grounds.

Presentations at Public Hearing

Four Service employees presented reports on the status of various migratory bird species for which early hunting seasons are being proposed. These reports are briefly reviewed as a matter of public information.

Dr. John Bruggink, Eastern Shore and Upland Game Bird Specialist, reported on the 1995 status of American woodcock. The 1994 recruitment index for the Eastern Region (1.4 immatures per adult female) was 17.6% below the long-term regional average; the recruitment index for the Central Region (1.5 immatures per adult female) was 11.8% below the long-term regional average. Daily hunting success in the Eastern Region decreased from 1.4 woodcock bagged per hunter in 1993 to

1.2 woodcock bagged per hunter in 1994 (-14.3%). The seasonal hunting success index decreased from 6.7 to 5.9 woodcock per hunter (-11.9%). In the Central Region, the daily success index decreased from 1.6 birds per hunter in 1993 to 1.4 birds per hunter in 1994 (-12.5%), and the seasonal success index decreased from 10.0 to 8.7 (-13.0%) woodcock bagged per hunter. Analysis of Singing-ground Survey data indicated that the number of displaying woodcock may have increased between 1994 and 1995 in the Eastern and Central regions (6.9 and 5.6%, respectively). Eleven-year (1985-95) trends from the Singing-ground Survey were negative (-2.0% and -2.8% per year for the Eastern and Central regions, respectively). There were long-term (1968-95) declines of 2.4% per year in the Eastern Region and 1.4% per year in the Central Region.

Mr. David Dolton, Western Shore and Upland Game Bird Specialist, presented the status of the mourning dove population in 1995. The report summarized call-count information gathered over the past 30 years. Trends were calculated for the most recent 2 and 10-year intervals and for the entire 30-year period. Between 1994 and 1995, the average number of doves heard per route declined significantly in the Central Management Unit, but did not change significantly in the Eastern or Western Units. No significant trend was found in doves heard in the Eastern or Central Units for either the 10 or 30-year time frames. In the Western Unit, no trend was evident over the most recent 10 years, but there has been a significant decline over 30 years. Trends for doves seen at the unit level over the 10 and 30-year periods agreed with trends for doves heard.

Mr. Dolton also presented the status of western white-winged doves in Arizona. Since the 1980s, whitewing numbers have remained relatively stable. The 1995 whitewing call-count index of 31.2 doves heard per route was 16 percent above the index in 1994. The harvest has been around 100,000 since 1987. In 1994, an estimated 122,000 birds were harvested.

Mr. Dolton then reported on the status of eastern white-winged doves and white-tipped doves in Texas. Results of the 1994 whitewing call-count survey indicate 440,000 birds were nesting in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Counties of Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy. This is a 28 percent decrease from 1994, but 7.3 percent above the average count of 410,200 for the previous 10 years. In Upper South Texas, an estimated 625,000 whitewings were nesting throughout a 19-county area. This is an 8 percent increase over last year's

population and marks the seventh year of a rapidly expanding population in this portion of the State. West Texas supports a small population of whitewings. The 1995 estimate of 15,700 birds was 7 percent below the 1994 estimate. For white-tipped doves, an average of 0.78 birds were heard per stop in both brush and citrus locations in 1995.

Finally, Mr. Dolton presented population and harvest information on band-tailed pigeons. Band-tailed pigeons are managed as two separate and distinct populations: the Coastal Population (Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada) and the Four-corners or Interior Population (Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico). For the Coastal Population, the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) indicates that there was a significant decline between 1968 and 1994. However, the population apparently has stabilized in the 10 years from 1985 to 1994. Mineral spring counts conducted in Oregon suggest that bandtails had two precipitous declines (in 1973 and again in 1985). Since 1985, these counts indicate that the population gradually has been increasing, but it remains at a lower level than during the 1970s. Counts at these selected springs in 1994 showed a 73 percent increase in pigeon use over 1993. Washington's call-count has shown a nonsignificant decline in the population from 1975-94. A significant population increase of 71 percent was found between 1993 and 1994. Two indirect population estimates suggest that overall bandtail numbers were between 2.4 and 3.1 million birds in 1992. With bag limits and season length continuing to be restricted, a harvest in 1994 of 5,226 pigeons was estimated for Oregon while a harvest of 11,500 was estimated for California in 1993. Neither Washington nor British Columbia chose to open a bandtail season in 1994. In the Four-corners area, BBS data showed a stable population between 1968 and 1994. The combined harvest for all four States in 1994 was 828 birds.

Dr. Jim Dubovsky, Waterfowl Specialist, presented information on 1995 habitat conditions for waterfowl and preliminary estimates of blue-winged teal abundance and harvests. Across most of the northcentral United States and eastern portions of the prairie provinces in Canada, habitat conditions for nesting ducks generally were good to excellent. Abundant water existed in basins and fields, and land managed in conservation easements in the United States continued to provide good nesting cover. In contrast, western portions of the Canadian provinces were extremely dry, and nesting habitats

worsened relative to recent years. The pond estimate for the northcentral United States and prairie Canada combined was 6.3 million. This was the highest estimate since 1979, and was 38% above the long-term average.

The 1995 May breeding population survey yielded an estimate of 5.1 million blue-winged teal, which is similar to the 1994 estimate of 4.6 million, but 23% above the long-term average. The estimated harvest of blue-winged teal during the 1994 September teal season was approximately 272,000 birds, which was 63% higher than that which occurred during the last two teal seasons. However, the 1994 harvest was comparable to historic estimates. The combined special and regular season harvest of all teal last year was 1.4 million, a figure 30% higher than that of recent years, but substantially lower than levels from the 1970s and early 1980s. Harvest rates of blue-winged teal during 1994-95 remained low and were similar to or lower than those which occurred historically.

Mr. David Sharp, Central Flyway Representative, reported on the status and harvests of sandhill cranes. The Mid-Continent Population appears to have stabilized following dramatic increases in the early 1980s. The preliminary 1995 spring index for the Central Platte River Valley, uncorrected for visibility, was 284,800. This index is significantly lower (-30 percent) than the previous year's index of 395,500. However, the photo-corrected 3-year average for the 1991-93 period was 420,866, which was 12 percent above the previous year's 3-year running average and within the established population-objective range of 343,000-465,000 cranes. All Central Flyway States, except Nebraska, elected to allow crane hunting in portions of their respective States in 1994-95; about 19,400 Federal permits were issued and approximately 7,400 permittees hunted one or more times. The number of permittees and active hunters were similar to the previous year's seasons. About 17,300 cranes were harvested in 1994-95, a 4 percent decrease from the previous year's estimate. Harvest information from Alaska, Canada and Mexico are not yet available, but collectively are believed to be about 7,000 during the 1994-95 sport hunting seasons. The total North American sport harvest was estimated to be about 30,000, which is similar to last year's estimate (-4 percent) and near (-7 percent) the all time high recorded in 1990. Annual surveys of the Rocky Mountain Population, which migrates through the San Luis Valley of Colorado in March, suggest that the population

has been relatively stable since 1984. The 1995 index of 20,200 cranes was within the established objective range of 18,000-22,000. Limited special seasons were held during 1994 in portions of Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, and resulted in an estimated harvest of 671 cranes.

Comments Received at Public Hearing

Ms. Susan Hagood, representing the Humane Society of the U.S., expressed concern about the continuation of seasons on species for which we have little population data. She recommended very restrictive or closed seasons on sea ducks and opposed rapidly increasing bag limits on any species with only one year of data. She further suggested that bag limits on common moorhens, snipe, and gallinules were excessive and encouraged "target shooting." She maintained that the opening of hunting seasons in Alaska should be delayed at least two weeks to allow birds to leave their natal areas. Further, she urged the Service to disallow pre-sunrise shooting.

Mr. Charles D. Kelley, representing the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, commended the Service for its management of migratory bird resources. He also indicated that the conservative thought used by the Service in the development of annual migratory bird hunting regulations was shared by the States. As a result of this conservative thought, he reiterated the Service's findings that declines seen in most game species were tied to habitat practices.

Mr. George Vandel, representing the Central Flyway Council and the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department, made some preliminary remarks regarding the status of this year's duck breeding populations and nesting conditions in South Dakota. He indicated that this spring's total breeding population was at a high level, with many species at record high levels. He further indicated that many factors contributed to this recovery, including improved precipitation patterns, availability of Conservation Reserve Program lands with high quality nesting cover, and the success of cooperative management programs such as those under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Mr. Vandel then reviewed several recommendations that were passed by the Central Flyway Council. With respect to early season issues, he supported the request to expand the open area for the hunting of Rocky Mountain sandhill cranes in Wyoming and recommended that no other changes

be made in Central Flyway hunting regulations. He indicated that a recently completed shooting hours report had been submitted as requested by the Service, and encouraged the Mississippi Flyway to also complete their report. He supported the use of Adaptive Harvest Management for duck harvest management in 1995 and indicated that this process was the result of good biology. He supported the use of flexible opening and closing framework dates for duck hunting and he indicated that the Service's policy on the use of zones and split seasons needed to be reviewed with the Flyway prior to next year's open season. He also supported the use of the point system in determining daily bag limits for ducks, and he indicated that the Flyway would work with the Service in identification of additional opportunities for the hunting of blue-winged teal and redheads. He noted that the Flyway had considered recent recommendations from a review of the Flyway Council system and would provide comment during this fall's meeting of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Flyway Consultants, he indicated that the Central Flyway Council had forwarded copies of proposed changes in the MOU and encouraged the Service to continue working with the other Flyway Councils in completing necessary revisions. Finally, he indicated that the Central Flyway Council will consider the issue of compensatory days for Sunday hunting for this year's late-season meetings.

Written Comments Received

The preliminary proposed rulemaking, which appeared in the March 24 **Federal Register**, opened the public comment period for migratory game bird hunting regulations. As of June 22, 1995, the Service had received 15 comments; 4 of these specifically addressed early-season issues. These early-season comments are summarized below and numbered in the order used in the March 24 **Federal Register**. Only the numbered items pertaining to early seasons for which written comments were received are included. The Service received recommendations from all four Flyway Councils. Some recommendations supported continuation of last year's frameworks. Due to the comprehensive nature of the annual review of the frameworks performed by the Councils, support for continuation of last year's frameworks is also assumed for items for which no recommendations were received.

Council recommendations for changes in the frameworks are summarized below.

1. Ducks

The categories used to discuss issues related to duck harvest management are as follows: (A) General Harvest Strategy, (B) Framework Dates, (C) Season Length, (D) Closed Seasons, (E) Bag Limits, (F) Zones and Split Seasons, and (G) Special Seasons/Species Management. Only those categories containing substantial recommendations are included below.

G. Special Seasons/Species Management

ii. September Teal Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Central Flyway Council recommended that the September teal season in the Central Flyway be increased from 9 to 16 days.

Written Comments: An individual from Texas expressed support for the Central Flyway's recommendation to expand the teal season to 16 days. Stating that the early teal season is important for Texas hunter opportunities, he believed that the season could be expanded without harm to the resource.

Service Response: A body of information exists regarding September teal seasons as currently structured; however, there is little information to address the potential impacts of 7 days added to the current season. The Service previously determined in the "Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds (SEIS 88)" that proposals for expansion of existing special regulations require a comprehensive evaluation plan containing study objectives, experimental design, decision criteria, and identification of data needs. The Central Flyway's proposal does not contain such a plan and is therefore inconsistent with SEIS 88. Any large-scale expansion of the September teal season, such as that recommended by the Central Flyway Council, likely will require a complete evaluation of the entire season in all areas where the teal season is currently offered. Future consideration by the Service of such a proposal, and accompanying evaluation plan, will also include a review of manpower and funding requirements as well as priority ranking relative to other proposals and programs.

4. Canada Geese

A. Special Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended

that Delaware and Rhode Island be permitted to initiate a 3-year experimental resident Canada goose season with framework dates of September 1 to 15.

The Atlantic Flyway Council also recommended that Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia be permitted to expand the hunt areas of their experimental goose seasons.

In North Carolina, the Atlantic Flyway Council requested that the framework date for the experimental resident Canada goose season in the Northeast hunt area be September 1 to 20.

The Upper-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended modification of the early Canada goose season criteria to allow any State to conduct a non-experimental special season between the dates of September 1 and 15. The Committee recommended that States continue monitoring hunter activity and success until they begin participation in the Harvest Information Program and close areas where evidence from band recoveries or other sources indicated unacceptable (greater than 10 percent) harvest of non-target populations of concern. Special seasons occurring after September 15 would be required to meet all existing Service criteria for special resident Canada goose seasons and would not be altered in any way during the 3-year experimental period.

If the above modifications to the special-season criteria are not approved, the Upper-Region Regulations Committee recommended the following experimental special seasons:

In Indiana, a Statewide season during September 1 to 15.

In Illinois, a season in the nine northeast counties of the State during September 9 to 18.

In Wisconsin, expand the size of the Southeastern Zone for a September 1 to 13 season.

The Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the flyway-wide framework for special resident giant Canada goose seasons be September 1 to 15 where areas of concern do not exist.

In Tennessee, the Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the zone for the special resident Canada goose season in east Tennessee be expanded from 11 to 28 counties, east of and including Anderson, Campbell, Hamilton, Rhea, and Roane Counties. The Committee also recommended that Tennessee be permitted to hold a special September

Canada goose season in the Kentucky/Barkley Lakes Zone in west Tennessee.

The Pacific Flyway Council requested modification of the early Canada goose seasons criteria to allow any State to conduct a season between the dates of September 1 and 15 for a 3-year experimental period. The Council recommended that States continue monitoring hunter activity and success until they begin participation in the Harvest Information Program and close areas where evidence from band recoveries or other sources indicated unacceptable (greater than 10 percent) harvest of non-target populations of concern. Special seasons occurring after September 15 would be required to meet all existing Service criteria for special Canada goose seasons and would not be altered in any way during the 3-year experimental period.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended continuation of the early September Canada goose season in southwestern Wyoming and that an experimental hunt be allowed in Teton County, Wyoming, where it would be by State permit (no more than 40 permits may be issued) with framework dates of September 1 to 15 and a maximum limit of 2 Canada geese permitted per season.

Written Comments: The Illinois Department of Conservation supported the Service's proposal to allow September 1 to 15 Canada goose seasons without requiring the data collection necessary under the Service's special Canada goose season criteria. They noted that this would free States from the constraints of gathering data, which can be difficult and expensive to obtain, and would allow greater management flexibility. Further, believing that the lack of harvest of migrants during these special seasons has been documented, they stated that these special seasons are an important component of their urban/suburban goose programs.

Service Response: The Service has reviewed the existing information from experimental special early Canada goose seasons and has concluded that the proposed modifications will meet the established criteria while reducing the cost and administrative burden of these seasons; however, the Service reaffirms its previously stated commitment to target these special seasons at locally breeding and/or nuisance Canada goose populations that nest primarily in the conterminous United States. The Service proposes to modify the criteria for special Canada goose seasons to permit States to choose one of two options for these special seasons:

Option 1: States (except Alaska and Hawaii) may hold a special early Canada goose season of up to 15 days

between the dates of September 1 and September 15. Such a season must receive Flyway Council endorsement prior to the establishment of federal frameworks, and States must agree to close any areas to hunting where evidence from band recoveries or other sources indicates unacceptable (greater than 10%) harvest of non-target populations during the special season. The Counties of Tuscola, Huron and Saginaw in Michigan are not eligible for this option because evidence of excessively high harvests of Southern James Bay Canada geese was obtained in a previous experimental evaluation. Additionally, because of evidence suggesting early-arriving migrant Canada geese, the special early Canada goose season in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan cannot extend beyond September 10.

Option 2: States may hold a special early Canada goose season that would include dates after September 15, except in those areas identified in Option 1. Such a season would be subject to all data-gathering, monitoring and reporting requirements in the special-season criteria. Additionally, such a season would not be subject to any modification during the experimental period.

The Service also proposes that when the criteria for special Canada goose seasons are modified, no additional modifications will be considered for at least five years, to allow sufficient time for evaluation of cumulative impacts.

The special-season criteria, including the modifications indicated above, are shown below:

Criteria for Special Canada Goose Seasons

1. States may hold special Canada goose seasons, in addition to their regular seasons, for the purpose of controlling local breeding populations or nuisance geese. These seasons are to be directed only at Canada goose populations that nest primarily in the conterminous United States and must target a specific population of Canada geese. The harvest of nontarget Canada geese must not exceed 10 percent of the special-season harvest during early seasons or 20 percent during late seasons. More restrictive proportions may apply in instances where a nontarget Canada goose population of special concern is involved.

2. Early seasons must be held prior to the regular season.

3. Late seasons must be held after the regular season but no later than February 15.

4. The daily bag and possession limits may be no more than 5 and 10 Canada geese, respectively.

5. The area(s) open to hunting will be described in State regulations.

6. For seasons that include hunting days after September 15:

A. All seasons will be conducted under a specific Memorandum of Agreement (Agreement). Provisions for discontinuing, extending, or modifying the seasons will be included in the Agreement.

B. All seasons initially will be considered experimental. The evaluation required of the State will be incorporated into the Agreement and will include at least the following:

(a) Conduct neck-collar observations (where appropriate) and population surveys beginning at least 2 years prior to the requested season and continuing during the experiment.

(b) Determine derivation of neck-collar codes and/or leg-band recoveries from observations and harvested geese.

(c) Collect morphological information from harvested geese, where appropriate, to ascertain probable source population(s) of the harvest.

(d) Analyze relevant band-recovery data.

(e) Estimate hunter activity and harvest.

(f) Prepare annual and final reports of the experiment.

C. If the results of the evaluation warrant continuation of the season beyond the experimental period, the State will continue to estimate hunter activity and harvest for all areas, including those areas where seasons do not extend beyond September 15, and report these to the Service annually until the State begins participating in the Harvest Information Program.

7. All special seasons will be subject to periodic re-evaluation when circumstances or special situations warrant.

B. Regular Seasons

The Service stated in the March 24, 1995, **Federal Register**, that it was reviewing the population status of the Atlantic Population of Canada geese and was conducting an assessment of the past 3 years of harvest reduction to determine whether additional harvest restrictions were necessary. Based on preliminary information from the recently completed spring breeding survey, the Service now believes that further harvest reduction is needed to reverse the downward trend in this population and increase the numbers of breeding pairs. The Service will work cooperatively with the Atlantic Flyway Council to modify the existing regulations and develop appropriate new season frameworks.

9. Sandhill Cranes

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended following the management plan with

respect to seasons on the Rocky Mountain Population of greater sandhill cranes. Pending final results of the March 1995 survey which should be available in June 1995, harvest guidelines would allow an open season in the States of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming if the population is above 16,000 cranes; otherwise, there would be no open season. With an open season, there would be no change in frameworks.

14. Woodcock

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended that woodcock season frameworks remain unchanged in the Eastern Region for 1995-96 unless adverse weather substantially depresses the breeding populations as measured by the 1995 Singing Ground Survey. The Council believes that population declines are attributed to habitat loss and degradation rather than due to current harvest levels.

Written Comments: The Pennsylvania Game Commission recommended that the Service and Flyway Councils develop a harvest management strategy for woodcock in which specific population objectives are identified that would require further harvest restrictions. They also are anticipating a more comprehensive analysis of the woodcock harvest when the Service's Harvest Information Program becomes fully operational.

18. Alaska

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended changes in bag and possession limits for ducks in Alaska. Specifically, the Council requested the following bag and possession limits for the two Alaska framework sets of restrictive and moderate/liberal, respectively: North Zone 8/24 or 10/30, Gulf Coast Zone 6/18 or 8/24, and Southeast, Pribilof/Aleutian, and Kodiak zones 5/15 or 7/21; and canvasback limits 2/4. Sea duck limits of 15/30 would be separate, with seasons to remain closed on spectacled and Steller's eiders.

Service Response: With the exceptions of canvasback, the Service agrees with the Council's recommendation and proposes to increase daily bag limits to 7 ducks in the Southeast, Pribilof/Aleutian, and Kodiak Zones, 8 ducks in the Gulf Coast Zone, and 10 ducks in the North Zone. Increases would be consistent with the moderate and liberal packages proposed under adaptive harvest management this year, and would return Alaska to the basic limits prevailing prior to

restrictions initiated in 1988. Duck breeding populations in Alaska-Yukon during 1995 were above the 1955-94 average by 99 percent for mallards, 90 percent for wigeon, 247 percent for green-winged teal, 164 percent for shovelers, and 896 percent for pintails.

Regarding the canvasback bag limit, the Service believes that harvest management of this species in Alaska and in all Flyways should adhere to the harvest strategy that was employed in 1994, which calls for annually assessing several population parameters, including estimated breeding population, habitat conditions, and harvest. Based on current population levels, expected production, and both last year's and this year's projected harvest estimates, the Service believes that a season in all Flyways and Alaska, with a 1-bird daily bag limit, is warranted.

20. Puerto Rico

Written Comments: Puerto Rico recommended that the daily bag limit for ducks be increased from 3 to 4 birds and that the daily bag limit for snipe be increased from 6 to 8 birds. This recommendation was further modified during the Service Regulations Committee meeting when the Puerto Rico representative requested a desire to have Puerto Rico's regulations be consistent with the Atlantic Flyway.

Service Response: The Service agrees with Puerto Rico's request to make duck and snipe daily bag limits consistent with those proposed for the Atlantic Flyway.

Public Comment Invited

Based on the results of migratory game bird studies now in progress and having due consideration for any data or views submitted by interested parties, the possible amendments resulting from this supplemental rulemaking will specify open seasons, shooting hours, and bag and possession limits for designated migratory game birds in the United States.

The Service intends that adopted final rules be as responsive as possible to all concerned interests, and therefore solicits the comments and suggestions of the public, other concerned governmental agencies, and private interests on these proposals. Such comments, and any additional information received, may lead to final regulations that differ from these proposals.

Special circumstances are involved in the establishment of these regulations which limit the amount of time that the Service can allow for public comment.

Specifically, two considerations compress the time in which the rulemaking process must operate: (1) the need to establish final rules at a point early enough in the summer to allow affected State agencies to appropriately adjust their licensing and regulatory mechanisms; and (2) the unavailability before mid-June of specific, reliable data on this year's status of some waterfowl and migratory shore and upland game bird populations. Therefore, the Service believes that to allow comment periods past the dates specified is contrary to the public interest.

Comment Procedure

It is the policy of the Department of the Interior, whenever practical, to afford the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. Accordingly, interested persons may participate by submitting written comments to the Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, room 634, Arlington Square, Washington, DC 20240. Comments received will be available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Service's office in room 634, Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia. All relevant comments received during the comment period will be considered. The Service will attempt to acknowledge comments received, but substantive responses to individual comments may not be provided.

NEPA Consideration

NEPA considerations are covered by the programmatic document, "Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds" (FSES 88-14), filed with EPA on June 9, 1988. Notice of Availability was published in the **Federal Register** on June 16, 1988 (53 FR 22582). The Service's Record of Decision was published on August 18, 1988 (53 FR 31341). Copies of these documents are available from the Service at the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

Endangered Species Act Consideration

The Division of Endangered Species is completing a biological opinion on the proposed action. As in the past, hunting regulations this year will be designed, among other things, to remove or alleviate chances of conflict between seasons for migratory game birds and the protection and conservation of endangered and threatened species. The Service's biological opinions resulting

from consultations under Section 7 are considered public documents and are available for inspection in the Division of Endangered Species (room 432) and the Office of Migratory Bird Management (room 634), Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

Regulatory Flexibility Act; Executive Order (E.O.) 12866 and the Paperwork Reduction Act

In the **Federal Register** dated March 24, 1995 (60 FR 15642), the Service reported measures it had undertaken to comply with requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act and the Executive Order. These included preparing an Analysis of Regulatory Effects and an updated Final Regulatory Impact Analysis (FRIA), and publication of a summary of the latter. Although a FRIA is no longer required, the economic analysis contained in the FRIA was reviewed and the Service determined that it met the requirements of E.O. 12866. However, the Service is currently preparing a Small Entity Flexibility Analysis, under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq), to further document the significant beneficial economic effect on a substantial number of small entities. This rule was not subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under E.O. 12866.

These proposed regulations contain no information collections subject to OMB review under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). However, the Service does utilize information acquired through other various information collections in the formulation of migratory game bird hunting regulations. These information collection requirements have been approved by OMB and assigned clearance numbers 1018-0005, 1018-0006, 1018-0008, 1018-0009, 1018-0010, 1018-0015, 1018-0019, and 1018-0023.

Authorship

The primary author of this proposed rulemaking is Robert J. Blohm, Office of Migratory Bird Management.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 20

Exports, Hunting, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation, Wildlife.

The rules that eventually will be promulgated for the 1994-95 hunting season are authorized under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (July 3, 1918), as amended, (16 U.S.C. 703-711); the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act (November 8, 1978), as amended, (16 U.S.C. 712); and the Fish and Wildlife

Act of 1956 (August 8, 1956), as amended, (16 U.S.C. 742 a—d and e—j).

Dated: July 13, 1995.

Robert P. Davison,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Proposed Regulations Frameworks for 1995-96 Early Hunting Seasons on Certain Migratory Game Birds

Pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and delegated authorities, the Department of the Interior approved the following proposed frameworks which prescribe season lengths, bag limits, shooting hours, and outside dates within which States may select for certain migratory game birds between September 1, 1995, and March 10, 1996.

General

Dates: All outside dates noted below are inclusive.

Shooting and Hawking (taking by falconry) Hours: Unless otherwise specified, from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily.

Possession Limits: Unless otherwise specified, possession limits are twice the daily bag limit.

Area, Zone, and Unit Descriptions: Geographic descriptions that differ from those published in the August 17, 1994, Federal Register (59 FR 42474) are contained in a later portion of this document.

Special September Teal Season

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and September 30, an open season on all species of teal may be selected by Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado (Central Flyway portion only), Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico (Central Flyway portion only), Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas in areas delineated by State regulations.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 9 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 4 teal.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio, where the hours are from sunrise to sunset.

Special September Duck Seasons

Florida: An experimental 5-consecutive-day season may be selected in September. The daily bag limit may not exceed 4 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate.

Kentucky and Tennessee: In lieu of a special September teal season, an experimental 5-consecutive-day season may be selected in September. The daily

bag limit may not exceed 4 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be wood ducks.

Iowa: Iowa may hold up to 5 days of its regular duck hunting season in September. All ducks which are legal during the regular duck season may be taken during the September segment of the season. The September season segment may commence no earlier than the Saturday nearest September 20 (September 23, 1995), with daily bag and possession limits being the same as those in effect during the 1995 regular duck season. The remainder of the regular duck season may not begin before October 15.

Scoter, Eider, and Oldsquaw Ducks (Atlantic Flyway)

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 20.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 107 days, with a daily bag limit of 7, singly or in the aggregate of the listed sea-duck species, of which no more than 4 may be scoters.

Daily Bag Limits During the Regular Duck Season: Within the special sea duck areas, during the regular duck season in the Atlantic Flyway, States may choose to allow the above sea duck limits in addition to the limits applying to other ducks during the regular duck season. In all other areas, sea ducks may be taken only during the regular open season for ducks and must be included in the regular duck season daily bag and possession limits.

Areas: In all coastal waters and all waters of rivers and streams seaward from the first upstream bridge in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York; in any waters of the Atlantic Ocean and in any tidal waters of any bay which are separated by at least 1 mile of open water from any shore, island, and emergent vegetation in New Jersey, South Carolina, and Georgia; and in any waters of the Atlantic Ocean and in any tidal waters of any bay which are separated by at least 800 yards of open water from any shore, island, and emergent vegetation in Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia; and provided that any such areas have been described, delineated, and designated as special sea-duck hunting areas under the hunting regulations adopted by the respective States.

Special Early Canada Goose Seasons

Atlantic Flyway

General Seasons

Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1-15 may be selected

by Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia and portions of Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 5 Canada geese.

Experimental Seasons

Experimental Canada goose seasons of up to 30 days may be selected by North Carolina during September 1-30, Statewide, except that the season may not exceed 20 days during September 1-20 in the Northeast Hunt Unit. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 5 Canada geese.

Mississippi Flyway

General Seasons

Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1-15, may be selected by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan (except in the Upper Peninsula, where the season may not extend beyond September 10, and in Huron, Saginaw and Tuscola Counties, where no special season may be held), Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

Experimental Seasons

Experimental Canada goose seasons may be selected by Illinois, Minnesota, and Tennessee. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

Outside Dates: September 1-18 in Illinois; September 1-16 in Minnesota; and September 1-30 in Tennessee.

Season Length: Not to exceed 10 days.

Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 5 Canada geese.

Pacific Flyway

General Seasons

Wyoming may select a September season on Canada geese subject to the following conditions:

1. Where applicable, the season must be concurrent with the September portion of the sandhill crane season.

2. Hunting will be by State permit.

3. No more than 150 permits, in total, may be issued.

4. Each permittee may take no more than 2 Canada geese per season.

Oregon, in the Lower Columbia River Zone, may select a season on Canada geese subject to the following conditions:

1. The season length is 12 days during September 1-12.

2. The daily bag limit is 3 Canada geese.

Experimental Seasons

Oregon, in the Northwest Zone, may select an experimental season on Canada geese subject to the following conditions:

1. The season length is 12 days during September 1-12.

2. Hunting will be by State permit.

3. Each permittee may take no more than 2 Canada geese per day.

Washington may select a season on Canada geese, subject to the following conditions, in the Lower Columbia River Zone:

1. The season length is 12 days during September 1-12.

2. The daily bag limit is 3 Canada geese.

Regular Goose Seasons

Regular goose seasons in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan may open as early as September 23. Season lengths and bag and possession limits will be established during the late-season regulations process.

Sandhill Cranes

Regular Seasons in the Central Flyway:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and February 28.

Hunting Seasons: Seasons not to exceed 58 consecutive days may be selected in designated portions of the following States: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Seasons not to exceed 93 consecutive days may be selected in designated portions of the following States: New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Daily Bag Limits: 3 sandhill cranes.

Permits: Each person participating in the regular sandhill crane seasons must have a valid Federal sandhill crane hunting permit in their possession while hunting.

Special Seasons in the Central and Pacific Flyways:

Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming may select seasons for hunting sandhill cranes within the range of the Rocky Mountain Population subject to the following conditions:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: The season in any State or zone may not exceed 30 days.

Bag limits: Not to exceed 3 daily and 9 per season.

Permits: Participants must have a valid permit, issued by the appropriate State, in their possession while hunting.

Other provisions: Numbers of permits, open areas, season dates, protection plans for other species, and other provisions of seasons must be consistent with the management plan and approved by the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils. All hunts except those in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming will be experimental.

Common Moorhens and Purple Gallinules

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 20 in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. States in the Pacific Flyway have been allowed to select their hunting seasons between the outside dates for the season on ducks; therefore, they are late-season frameworks and no frameworks are provided in this document.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 70 days in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. Seasons may be split into two segments. The daily bag limit is 15 common moorhens and purple gallinules, singly or in the aggregate of the two species.

Rails

Outside Dates: States included herein may select seasons between September 1 and January 20 on clapper, king, sora, and Virginia rails.

Hunting Seasons: The season may not exceed 70 days, and may be split into two segments.

Daily Bag Limits:

Clapper and King Rails - In Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, 10, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. In Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, 15, singly or in the aggregate of the two species.

Sora and Virginia Rails - In the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways and the Pacific-Flyway portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming, 25 daily and 25 in possession, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. The season is closed in the remainder of the Pacific Flyway.

Common Snipe

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and February 28, except in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, where the season must end no later than January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 107 days and may be split into two segments. The daily bag limit is 8 snipe.

American Woodcock

Outside Dates: States in the Atlantic Flyway may select hunting seasons between October 1 and January 31. States in the Central and Mississippi Flyways may select hunting seasons between September 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: In the Atlantic Flyway, seasons may not exceed 45 days, with a daily bag limit of 3; in the Central and Mississippi Flyways, seasons may not exceed 65 days, with a daily bag limit of 5. Seasons may be split into two segments.

Zoning: New Jersey may select seasons in each of two zones. The season in each zone may not exceed 35 days.

Band-tailed Pigeons

Pacific Coast States (California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada)

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 1.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 9 consecutive days, with bag and possession limits of 2 and 2 band-tailed pigeons, respectively.

Permit Requirement: The appropriate State agency must issue permits, and report on harvest and hunter participation to the Service by June 1 of the following year, or participate in the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program.

Zoning: California may select hunting seasons not to exceed 9 consecutive days in each of two zones. The season in the North Zone must close by October 7.

Four-Corners States (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah)

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and November 30.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 30 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 5 band-tailed pigeons.

Permit Requirement: The appropriate State agency must issue permits, and report on harvest and hunter participation to the Service by June 1 of the following year, or participate in the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program.

Zoning: New Mexico may select hunting seasons not to exceed 20 consecutive days in each of two zones. The season in the South Zone may not open until October 1.

Mourning Doves

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15, except as otherwise provided, States may select hunting seasons and daily bag limits as follows:

Eastern Management Unit (All States east of the Mississippi River, and Louisiana)

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 70 days with a daily bag limit of 12, or not more than 60 days with a daily bag limit of 15.

Zoning and Split Seasons: States may select hunting seasons in each of two zones. The season within each zone may be split into not more than three periods. The hunting seasons in the South Zones of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi may commence no earlier than September 20. Regulations for bag and possession limits, season length, and shooting hours must be uniform within specific hunting zones.

Central Management Unit (Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming)

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 70 days with a daily bag limit of 12, or not more than 60 days with a daily bag limit of 15.

Zoning and Split Seasons: States may select hunting seasons in each of two zones. The season within each zone may be split into not more than three periods. Texas may select hunting seasons for each of three zones subject to the following conditions:

A. The hunting season may be split into not more than two periods, except in that portion of Texas in which the special white-winged dove season is allowed, where a limited mourning dove season may be held concurrently with that special season (see white-winged dove frameworks).

B. A season may be selected for the North and Central Zones between September 1 and January 25; and for the South Zone between September 20 and January 25.

C. Each zone may have a daily bag limit of 12 doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, no more than 6 of which may be white-winged doves and no more than 2 of which may be white-tipped doves, except that during the special white-winged dove season, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 5 may be mourning doves and 2 may be white-tipped doves.

D. Except as noted above, regulations for bag and possession limits, season

length, and shooting hours must be uniform within each hunting zone.

Western Management Unit (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington)

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington - Not more than 30 consecutive days with a daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves (in Nevada, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate).

Arizona and California - Not more than 60 days which may be split between two periods, September 1-15 and November 1-January 15. In Arizona, during the first segment of the season, the daily bag limit is 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 6 may be white-winged doves. During the remainder of the season, the daily bag limit is restricted to 10 mourning doves. In California, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

White-winged and White-tipped Doves

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits:

Except as shown below, seasons in Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas must be concurrent with mourning dove seasons.

Arizona may select a hunting season of not more than 30 consecutive days, running concurrently with the first segment of the mourning dove season. The daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 6 may be white-winged doves.

In Florida, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning and white-winged doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, of which no more than 4 may be white-winged doves.

In the Nevada Counties of Clark and Nye, and in the California Counties of Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

In New Mexico, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning and white-winged doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate.

In Texas, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, of which not more than 6 may be white-winged doves and not more than 2 may be white-tipped doves.

In addition, Texas may also select a hunting season of not more than 4 days

for the special white-winged dove area of the South Zone between September 1 and September 19. The daily bag limit may not exceed 10 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 5 may be mourning doves and 2 may be white-tipped doves.

Alaska

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 26.

Hunting Seasons: Alaska may select 107 consecutive days for waterfowl, sandhill cranes, and common snipe in each of five zones. The season may be split without penalty in the Kodiak Zone. The seasons in each zone must be concurrent.

Closures: The season is closed on Canada geese from Unimak Pass westward in the Aleutian Island chain. The hunting season is closed on Aleutian Canada geese, emperor geese, spectacled eiders, and Steller's eiders.

Daily Bag and Possession limits:

Ducks - Except as noted, a basic daily bag limit of 7 and a possession limit of 21 ducks. Daily bag and possession limits in the North Zone are 10 and 30, and in the Gulf Coast Zone they are 8 and 24, respectively. The basic limits may include no more than 1 canvasback daily and 3 in possession.

In addition to the basic limit, there is a daily bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of 30 scoter, common and king eiders, oldsquaw, harlequin, and common and red-breasted mergansers, singly or in the aggregate of these species.

Geese - A basic daily bag limit of 6, of which not more than 4 may be greater white-fronted or Canada geese, singly or in the aggregate of these species, except that the daily bag limit on Canada geese in Game Management Units 9E and 18 is 1.

Brant - A daily bag limit of 2.

Common snipe - A daily bag limit of 8.

Sandhill cranes - A daily bag limit of 3.

Tundra swans - Open seasons for tundra swans may be selected subject to the following conditions:

1. No more than 300 permits may be issued in GMU 22, authorizing each permittee to take 1 tundra swan per season.

2. No more than 500 permits may be issued during the experimental season in GMU 18. No more than 1 tundra swan may be taken per permit.

3. The seasons must be concurrent with other migratory bird seasons.

4. The appropriate State agency must issue permits, obtain harvest and hunter-participation data, and report the results of this hunt to the Service by June 1 of the following year.

Hawaii

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 60 days (70 under the alternative) for mourning doves.

Bag Limits: Not to exceed 15 (12 under the alternative) mourning doves.

Note: Mourning doves may be taken in Hawaii in accordance with shooting hours and other regulations set by the State of Hawaii, and subject to the applicable provisions of 50 CFR part 20.

Puerto Rico

Doves and Pigeons:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 60 days.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: Not to exceed 10 Zenaida, mourning, and white-winged doves in the aggregate. Not to exceed 5 scaly-naped pigeons.

Closed Areas: There is no open season on doves or pigeons in the following areas: Municipality of Culebra, Desecheo Island, Mona Island, El Verde Closure Area, and Cidra Municipality and adjacent areas.

Ducks, Coots, Moorhens, Gallinules, and Snipe:

Outside Dates: Between October 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 55 days may be selected for hunting ducks, common moorhens, and common snipe. The season may be split into two segments.

Daily Bag Limits:

Ducks - Same as those proposed for the Atlantic Flyway.

Common moorhens - Not to exceed 6.

Common snipe - Not to exceed 8.

Closed Seasons: The season is closed on the ruddy duck, white-cheeked pintail, West Indian whistling duck, fulvous whistling duck, and masked duck, which are protected by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The season also is closed on the purple gallinule, American coot, and Caribbean coot.

Closed Areas: There is no open season on ducks, common moorhens, and common snipe in the Municipality of Culebra and on Desecheo Island.

Virgin Islands

Doves and Pigeons:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 60 days for Zenaida doves.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: Not to exceed 10 Zenaida doves.

Closed Seasons: No open season is prescribed for ground or quail doves, or pigeons in the Virgin Islands.

Closed Areas: There is no open season for migratory game birds on Ruth Cay (just south of St. Croix).

Local Names for Certain Birds: Zenaida dove, also known as mountain dove; bridled quail-dove, also known as Barbary dove or partridge; Common ground-dove, also known as stone dove, tobacco dove, rola, or tortolita; scaly-naped pigeon, also known as red-necked or scaled pigeon.

Ducks

Outside Dates: Between December 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 55 consecutive days.

Daily Bag Limits: Same as the limit proposed for the Atlantic Flyway.

Closed Seasons: The season is closed on the ruddy duck, white-cheeked pintail, West Indian whistling duck, fulvous whistling duck, and masked duck.

Special Falconry Regulations

Falconry is a permitted means of taking migratory game birds in any State meeting Federal falconry standards in 50 CFR 21.29(k). These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

Extended Seasons: For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons shall not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments.

Framework Dates: Seasons must fall between September 1 and March 10.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: Falconry daily bag and possession limits for all permitted migratory game birds shall not exceed 3 and 6 birds, respectively, singly or in the aggregate, during extended falconry seasons, any special or experimental seasons, and regular hunting seasons in all States, including those that do not select an extended falconry season.

Regular Seasons: General hunting regulations, including seasons and hunting hours, apply to falconry in each State listed in 50 CFR 21.29(k). Regular-season bag and possession limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

Area, Unit, and Zone Descriptions

Central Flyway portion of the following States consists of:

Colorado: That area lying east of the Continental Divide.

Montana: That area lying east of Hill, Chouteau, Cascade, Meagher, and Park Counties.

New Mexico: That area lying east of the Continental Divide but outside the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation.

Wyoming: That area lying east of the Continental Divide.

The remaining portions of these States are in the Pacific Flyway.

Mourning and White-winged Doves

Alabama

South Zone - Baldwin, Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Escambia, Geneva, Henry, Houston, and Mobile Counties.

North Zone - Remainder of the State.

California

White-winged Dove Open Areas - Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

Florida

Northwest Zone - The Counties of Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Washington, Leon (except that portion north of U.S. 27 and east of State Road 155), Jefferson (south of U.S. 27, west of State Road 59 and north of U.S. 98), and Wakulla (except that portion south of U.S. 98 and east of the St. Marks River).

South Zone - Remainder of State.

Georgia

Northern Zone - That portion of the State lying north of a line running west to east along U.S. Highway 280 from Columbus to Wilcox County, thence southward along the western border of Wilcox County; thence east along the southern border of Wilcox County to the Ocmulgee River, thence north along the Ocmulgee River to Highway 280, thence east along Highway 280 to the Little Ocmulgee River; thence southward along the Little Ocmulgee River to the Ocmulgee River; thence southwesterly along the Ocmulgee River to the western border of the Jeff Davis County; thence south along the western border of Jeff Davis County; thence east along the southern border of Jeff Davis and Appling Counties; thence north along the eastern border of Appling County, to the Altamaha River; thence east to the eastern border of Tattnall County; thence north along the eastern border of Tattnall County; thence north along the western border of Evans to Candler County; thence west along the southern border of Candler County to the Ochoopee River; thence north along the western border of Candler County to Bulloch County; thence north along the western border of Bulloch County to U.S. Highway 301; thence northeast

along U.S. Highway 301 to the South Carolina line.

South Zone - Remainder of the State.

Louisiana

North Zone - That portion of the State north of Interstate Highway 10 from the Texas State line to Baton Rouge, Interstate Highway 12 from Baton Rouge to Slidell and Interstate Highway 10 from Slidell to the Mississippi State line.

South Zone - The remainder of the State.

Mississippi

South Zone - The Counties of Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, and Walthall.

North Zone - The remainder of the State.

Nevada

White-winged Dove Open Areas - Clark and Nye Counties.

Texas

North Zone - That portion of the State north of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Fort Hancock; north along FM 1088 to TX 20; west along TX 20 to TX 148; north along TX 148 to I-10 at Fort Hancock; east along I-10 to I-20; northeast along I-20 to I-30 at Fort Worth; northeast along I-30 to the Texas-Arkansas State line.

South Zone - That portion of the State south and west of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Del Rio, proceeding east on U.S. 90 to San Antonio; then east on I-10 to Orange, Texas.

Special White-winged Dove Area in the South Zone - That portion of the State south and west of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Del Rio, proceeding east on U.S. 90 to Uvalde; south on U.S. 83 to TX 44; east along TX 44 to TX 16 at Freer; south along TX 16 to TX 285 at Hebbronville; east along TX 285 to FM 1017; southwest along FM 1017 to TX 186 at Linn; east along TX 186 to the Mansfield Channel at Port Mansfield; east along the Mansfield Channel to the Gulf of Mexico.

Area with additional restrictions - Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties.

Central Zone - That portion of the State lying between the North and South Zones.

Band-tailed Pigeons

California

North Zone - Alpine, Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity Counties.

South Zone - The remainder of the State.

New Mexico

North Zone - North of a line following U.S. 60 from the Arizona State line east to I-25 at Socorro and then south along I-25 from Socorro to the Texas State line.

South Zone - Remainder of the State.

Washington

Western Washington - The State of Washington excluding those portions lying east of the Pacific Crest Trail and east of the Big White Salmon River in Klickitat County.

Woodcock

New Jersey

North Zone - That portion of the State north of NJ 70.

South Zone - The remainder of the State.

Special September Goose Seasons

Atlantic Flyway

North Carolina

Northeast Hunt Unit - Counties of Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Hyde, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington.

Mississippi Flyway (Experimental Seasons)

Illinois

Northeast Zone - Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties.

Minnesota

Twin Cities Metro Zone - All of Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

In Anoka County; the municipalities of Andover, Anoka, Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Fridley, Hilltop, Lexington, Lino Lakes, Ramsey, and Spring Lake Park; that portion of Columbus Township lying south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18; and all of the municipality of Ham Lake except that portion described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of CSAH 18 and U.S. Highway 65, then east along CSAH 18 to the eastern boundary of Ham Lake, north along the eastern boundary of Ham Lake to the north boundary of Ham Lake, west along the north boundary of Ham Lake to U.S. 65, and south along U.S. 65 to the point of beginning.

In Carver County; the municipalities of Carver, Chanhassen, Chaska, and Victoria; the Townships of Chaska and Laketown; and those portions of the municipalities of Cologne, Mayer, Waconia, and Watertown and the Townships of Benton, Dahlgren, Waconia, and Watertown lying north and east of the following described line:

Beginning on U.S. 212 at the southwest corner of the municipality of Chaska, then west along U.S. 212 to

State Trunk Highway (STH) 284, north along STH 284 to CSAH 10, north and west along CSAH 10 to CSAH 30, north and west along CSAH 30 to STH 25, west and north along STH 25 to CSAH 10, north along CSAH 10 to the Carver County line, and east along the Carver County line to the Hennepin County line.

In Dakota County; the municipalities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Rosemont, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, and West St. Paul; and the Township of Nininger.

In Scott County; the municipalities of Jordan, Prior Lake, Savage and Shakopee; and the Townships of Credit River, Jackson, Louisville, St. Lawrence, Sand Creek, and Spring Lake.

In Washington County; the municipalities of Afton, Bayport, Birchwood, Cottage Grove, Dellwood, Forest Lake, Hastings, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Landfall, Mahtomedi, Marine, Newport, Oakdale, Oak Park Heights, Pine Springs, St. Croix Beach, St. Mary's Point, St. Paul Park, Stillwater, White Bear Lake, Willernie, and Woodbury; the Townships of Baytown, Denmark, Grant, Gray Cloud Island, May, Stillwater, and West Lakeland; that portion of Forest Lake Township lying south of STH 97 and CSAH 2; and those portions of New Scandia Township lying south of STH 97 and a line due east from the intersection of STH 97 and STH 95 to the eastern border of the State.

Fergus Falls/Benson Zone - That area encompassed by a line beginning on State Trunk Highway (STH) 55 at the Minnesota border, then south along the Minnesota border to a point due south of the intersection of STH 7 and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 7 in Big Stone County, north to the STH 7/CSAH 7 intersection and continuing north along CSAH 7 to CSAH 6 in Big Stone County, east along CSAH 6 to CSAH 21 in Big Stone County, south along CSAH 21 to CSAH 10 in Big Stone County, east along CSAH 10 to CSAH 22 in Swift County, east along CSAH 22 to CSAH 5 in Swift County, south along CSAH 5 to U.S. Highway 12, east along U.S. 12 to CSAH 17 in Swift County, south along CSAH 17 to the Swift County border, east along the south border of Swift County and north along the east border of Swift County to the south border of Pope County, east along the south border of Pope County and north along the east border of Pope County to STH 28, west along STH 28 to CSAH 33 in Pope County, north along CSAH 33 to CSAH 3 in Douglas County, north along

CSAH 3 to CSAH 69 in Otter Tail County, north along CSAH 69 to CSAH 46 in Otter Tail County, east along CSAH 46 to the east border of Otter Tail County, north along the east border of Otter Tail County to CSAH 40 in Otter Tail County, west along CSAH 40 to CSAH 75 in Otter Tail County, north along CSAH 75 to STH 210, west along STH 210 to STH 108, north along STH 108 to CSAH 1 in Otter Tail County, west along CSAH 1 to CSAH 14 in Otter Tail County, north along CSAH 14 to CSAH 44 in Otter Tail County, west along CSAH 44 to CSAH 35 in Otter Tail County, north along CSAH 35 to STH 108, west along STH 108 to CSAH 19 in Wilkin County, south along CSAH 19 to STH 55, then west along STH 55 to the point of beginning.

Southwest Canada Goose Zone - All of Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, LeSueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan Counties; that portion of Brown County lying south and west of the following described line: beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 14, and the east of Brown County line; thence west on U.S. Highway 14 to Cobden; thence due west one mile on U.S. Highway 14 and the township road to the Brown County line; thence due west 12 miles along the county line to the west Brown County line; that portion of Renville County east of State Trunk Highway 4 (STH); that portion of Meeker County south of U.S. Highway 12; in Scott County, the Townships of Belle Plaine, Blakeley, and Helena, including the municipalities located therein; and that portion of Carver County lying west, of the following described line: beginning at the northeast corner of San Francisco Township, thence west along the San Francisco Township line to the east boundary of Dahlgren Township, thence north on the Dahlgren Township line to U.S. Highway 212, thence west on U.S. Highway 212 to STH 284, thence north on STH 284 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 10, thence north and west on CSAH 10 to CSAH 30, thence north and west on CSAH 30 the STH 25, thence east and north on STH 25 to CSAH 10, thence north on CSAH 10 to the Carver County line.

Tennessee

East Tennessee Zone - That portion of the State east of and including Anderson, Campbell, Hamilton, Rhea, and Roane Counties.

Kentucky/Barkley Lakes Zone - That portion of the State bounded on the west by the eastern boundaries of the Northwest and Southwest Zones and on the east by State Highway 13 from the Alabama border to Clarksville and U.S.

Highway 79 from Clarksville to the Kentucky border.

Sandhill Cranes

Central Flyway

Colorado

Regular-Season Open Area - The Central Flyway portion of the State except the San Luis Valley (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Hinsdale, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache Counties east of the Continental Divide) and North Park (Jackson County).

Kansas

Regular Season Open Area - That portion of the State west of a line beginning at the Oklahoma border, north on I-35 to Wichita, north on I-135 to Salina, and north on U.S. 81 to the Nebraska border.

New Mexico

Regular-Season Open Area - Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Quay, and Roosevelt Counties.

Middle Rio Grande Valley Area - The Central Flyway portion of New Mexico in Socorro and Valencia Counties.

Southwest Zone - Sierra, Luna, and Dona Ana Counties.

Oklahoma

Regular-Season Open Area - That portion of the State west of I-35.

Texas

Regular-Season Open Area - That portion of the State west of a line from the International Toll Bridge at Brownsville along U.S. 77 to Victoria; U.S. 87 to Placedo; Farm Road 616 to Blessing; State 35 to Alvin; State 6 to U.S. 290; U.S. 290 to Austin; I-35 to the Texas-Oklahoma border.

North Dakota

Regular-Season Open Area - That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

South Dakota

Regular-Season Open Area - That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

Montana

Regular-Season Open Area - The Central Flyway portion of the State except that area south of I-90 and west of the Bighorn River.

Wyoming

Regular-Season Open Area - Campbell, Converse, Crook, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, Platte, and Weston Counties.

Riverton-Boysen Unit - Portions of Fremont County.

Pacific Flyway

Arizona

Special-Season Area - Game Management Units 30A, 30B, 31, and 32.

Montana

Special-Season Area - See State regulations.

Utah
Special-Season Area - Rich and Cache Counties.

Wyoming

Bear River Area - That portion of Lincoln County described in State regulations.

Salt River Area - That portion of Lincoln County described in State regulations.

Eden-Farson Area - Those portions of Sweetwater and Sublette Counties described in State regulations.

All Migratory Game Birds in Alaska

North Zone - State Game Management Units 11-13 and 17-26.

Gulf Coast Zone - State Game Management Units 5-7, 9, 14-16, and 10 - Unimak Island only.

Southeast Zone - State Game Management Units 1-4.

Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zone - State Game Management Unit 10 - except Unimak Island.

Kodiak Zone - State Game Management Unit 8.

All Migratory Birds in the Virgin Islands

Ruth Cay Closure Area - The island of Ruth Cay, just south of St. Croix.

All Migratory Birds in Puerto Rico

Municipality of Culebra Closure Area - All of the municipality of Culebra.

Desecheo Island Closure Area - All of Desecheo Island.

Mona Island Closure Area - All of Mona Island.

El Verde Closure Area - Those areas of the municipalities of Rio Grande and Loiza delineated as follows: (1) All lands between Routes 956 on the west and 186 on the east, from Route 3 on the north to the juncture of Routes 956 and 186 (Km 13.2) in the south; (2) all lands between Routes 186 and 966 from the juncture of 186 and 966 on the north, to the Caribbean National Forest Boundary on the south; (3) all lands lying west of Route 186 for one kilometer from the juncture of Routes 186 and 956 south to Km 6 on Route 186; (4) all lands within Km 14 and Km 6 on the west and the

Caribbean National Forest Boundary on the east; and (5) all lands within the Caribbean National Forest Boundary whether private or public.

Cidra Municipality and adjacent areas - All of Cidra Municipality and portions of Aguas, Buenas, Caguas, Cayer, and Comerio Municipalities as encompassed within the following boundary: beginning on Highway 172 as it leaves the municipality of Cidra on the west edge, north to Highway 156, east on Highway 156 to Highway 1, south on Highway 1 to Highway 765, south on Highway 765 to Highway 763, south on Highway 763 to the Rio Guavate, west along Rio Guavate to Highway 1, southwest on Highway 1 to Highway 14, west on Highway 14 to Highway 729, north on Highway 729 to Cidra Municipality boundary to the point of beginning.

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